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S E C R E T SECTION 01 OF 02 SANAA 001325

SIPDIS

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TAGS: [PREL](#) [PTER](#) [PINR](#) [YM](#) [COUNTER](#) [TERRORISM](#)

SUBJECT: ROYG AL-HOUTHI CELL ROUND UP REVEALS PLANS TO  
TARGET AMBASSADOR

Classified By: Ambassador Thomas C. Krajewski for reasons 1.4 b and d.

1. (S) Summary. On May 15 Interior Minister Rashad al-Alimi informed Ambassador of the round up of al-Houthi cells responsible for the recent series of deadly grenade attacks on ROYG Military officials in Sanaa. Alimi shared alarming information garnered from MOI and PSO investigations that one of the cells was targeting Embassy and Ambassador and had stored weapons including missiles in an apartment near the Embassy compound. Alimi said he was confident that these cells no longer constituted a threat to Ambassador or Embassy. Alimi said these arrests revealed a dangerous evolution of al-Houthi tactics since the insurrection broke out last June, saying that although they have not connection "they are learning from al-Qaida tactics and techniques." End Summary.

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Al-Houthi Cell Round Up, Weapons Found  
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2. (S) Assuring Ambassador that the safety and security of the U.S. Embassy is a ROYG priority, Alimi pulled out four pages of hand-written notes and began to brief. The Minister announced that 21 individuals had been arrested as a result of Ministry of Interior (MOI) and Political Security Organization (PSO) investigations into the recent series of grenade attacks against ROYG officials in Sanaa. (Note: Local press reported that 21 al-Houthi supporters were arrested for a perpetrating grenade attacks against Yemeni military officials and vehicles. End Note.) Of the 21 arrested, 11 remain in ROYG custody.

3. (S) Alimi stated his certainty that the evidence gathered by MOI and PSO during searches and interrogations was more than sufficient to prosecute and convict the 11 cell members. He reported that during the round up 26 persons were injured and two killed, including one security officer. Explosives and weapons, including 10 missiles (NFI) were found in cell locations, along with documents clearly implicated the members. Alimi promised to share all these documents as well as the names and information gathered about these individuals with the USG.

4. (S) Alimi said that the al-Houthi supporters have dramatically changed tactics since the insurrection broke out last June and are "learning from al-Qaida." As evidence he pointed to the use of women to transport weapons and of the 'cell structure' to maintain their security. Ambassador sought clarification as to whether or not the cells had any connection at all to AQ and Alimi said there was not any information to suggest such a connection.

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Cell Targeting Embassy, Ambassador  
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5. (S) Alimi told Ambassador "the most dangerous cell" had been using a rented apartment in close proximity to the Embassy, and that weapons (including anti-tank weapons) and explosives (TNT) were found at this site. A target list was also recovered that included the Ambassador, the Embassy compound, President Saleh, and Ministry of Defense officials. Alimi said he did not believe this cell or others currently constituted a treat to USG personnel or the Embassy, as most of the members had been captured or were on the run and unable to go operational.

6. (S) Alimi reported that PSO and MOI arrests and interrogations revealed that the Ambassador had been surveilled during his March 31 trip to Dhamar and his April 31 visit to Maarib. According to Alimi, the men who conducted this surveillance had been captured. (Note: Alimi provided the following names: Saber Johaf, al-Jahaf, Ehab al-Kochani, Hussein al-Zakaf, Ahmed Zalafi, and added that many others are also in ROYG detention. End Note.)

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Several Remain at Large  
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7. (S) MOI believes several cells members are still at large, Alimi told Ambassador, but assured that MOI and PSO are following every lead. The Minister said he believed those still on the loose received orders from Sadaa to return

following the round up, but had been unable to do so for fear of capture. Their pictures and/or descriptions have been disseminated to police and security checkpoints throughout Yemen. Ambassador told Alimi that the USG stood ready to help in this effort in any way it can.

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Female Cell Member Cooperating  
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18. (S) One cell member arrested is a woman, Intasar Sayyani, who is married to a second member, Ahab Kalani. Alimi said Sayyani confessed and is cooperating with security officials. She has explained the goals of the cell, its operational plans, and she led authorities to the stored weapons. According to Sayyani, the cell had been actively seeking a residence near the Embassy with a "high location" that afforded an unobstructed view. Alimi said that the leader of this "most dangerous cell" has also confessed, and that the ROYG has documents in his handwriting that implicate the cell in targeting Ambassador, the Embassy, President Saleh, and other ROYG military officials.

19. (S) Ambassador called an EAC May 16 to discuss this information and possible reaction (reported septel).  
Krajeski